A PRIMER OF RIGHT AND WRONG

J. N. LARNED

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A PRIMER OF RIGHT AND WRONG

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

BY

J. N. LARNED

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A PRIMER OF RIGHT AND WRONG

A PRIMER OF RIGHT AND WRONG

I

RIGHT AND WRONG

THE word RIGHT, as we all know, has a number of meanings that seem to be not much alike. As we use it in geometry, speaking of a "*right* line," we mean a line that is *straight*. We use it in another sense when we say of some action that it was "the *right* thing to do;" and in this case we may mean that it was the *wisest* action that could be taken, or we may mean that it was morally the *best* thing to do, the *true* thing, the thing which *ought to be* done, because of a

Meanings of the word "right."

goodness in itself which we are able to see. In still another sense of the word we may say that men have a *right* to the free use of their minds in thought, and of their tongues in speech, and of their hands in work, so long as they harm no others; and then we mean that if such freedom is taken away from them they are abused and oppressed.

Now, these and other meanings of the word RIGHT may seem to differ widely, but there is reason to believe that all of them grew out of the one simple idea which is expressed in the first example given above, namely, the idea of *a straight line*. It appears to be the fact that long ago, when our language was being slowly made up, the word which we have shaped finally

into the spelling and pronunciation of this word RIGHT was used first to express the idea of *straightness*, and nothing else. That was a very simple idea, which men's minds took easily from their eyes. They could see *straightness* in many things; but it is possible that the idea of it was especially impressed upon them by the tightened strings of their bent bows; for when they first used the word *straight*, it meant *stretched*, — a stretched or tightened cord, or a line of any kind from which all crookedness had been taken out, making it RIGHT.

The idea of straightness.

The first use of the word RIGHT, then, by the simple-minded people who invented it, was probably to express

just so much of an idea of *straightness* as their sight and feeling of a stretched string could convey to their minds. But afterward, when these or some later people began to form moral ideas, and needed a word to signify the *good quality* which they found in some of their own actions, contrasted with an opposite quality in others, they seem to have felt that it was like the *straightness* of a stretched line, in contrast with the crookedness, the wavering and turning, of other lines; and so they called it, as they had called the straightened line, RIGHT. The same feeling led them to say that acts of good judgment or wisdom were RIGHT; and then to use that expressive word in making up many other words,

The moral meaning.

all carrying ideas which seem to be suggestive in some way of the stretching of things into *straightness*, like the tightening of a cord. Then, of course, they had need of a word to mean morally the opposite of RIGHT, and naturally, as before, they took one already in use, which bore an idea that would contrast with that of the straightened cord. The word they chose has come to our language in one form as *wrung*, meaning twisted, and in another form as WRONG, meaning everything that is not RIGHT.

The word "wrong."

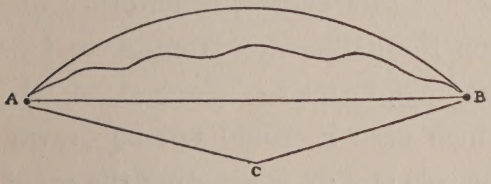
So we find that RIGHT and WRONG, which are really the most important in their final meaning of all the words that we speak or write, got those meanings at the beginning from the very simple

ideas of straightening and straightness, for one, and of twisting and crookedness for the other. The thought of a straight line — a "*right* line" — is the primary thought in both. Those who made our language have given it to us as the idea on which to form our notions of RIGHT and WRONG, and when we study the matter closely, we see that they did so neither ignorantly nor by accident, but with a wonderfully fine sense of the true likeness of things. We find, indeed, that this simple, representative idea of straightness has to be kept in our minds, and carried distinctly into many practical questions between RIGHT and WRONG, if our moral understanding is to be clear and our moral judgments are to be true. There is

really no study that ought to be more carefully made.

A straight line may be described in several ways. In the best known description it is said to be that line which marks the shortest distance between two points. Euclid, the old Greek geometer, described it as a line that lies evenly between its points. When we look at a straight line, in

A straight line.



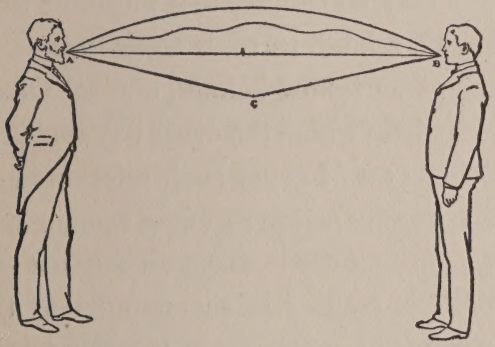
comparison with other lines, our eyes tell us that these descriptions are true. We need no other proof than the seeing.

But other facts as to the nature of the straight line are apparent to us when we see it. One is, that if we draw a line between two points for the sole purpose of connecting them, or relating them to each other, it can be no other than a straight line, because one object or end can give it only one direction. It can depart from straightness only by taking, somewhere in its course, some other direction for a time (as from A to C, for example, instead of from A to B), in which case it would not be drawn to the sole end of connecting the point A with the point B, or the point B with the point A. This, therefore, is the true line, the *right line*, of connection between A and B; and manifestly it is

Why the "right line."

the one, and the only one, that truly and exactly marks the relation of these two points to one another.

Now let us imagine two persons in the place of these two points, and then



imagine connections or relations between them which we represent in a figurative way by drawing lines, as before.

The connection imagined may be any one of the many that arise out of the

numberless relations existing among men. The man A and the man B may be talking together, or they may be buying and selling, or they may be employer and employed in some work, or they may be teacher and pupil, or they may be related to each other in no way except as fellow beings, one of whom needs help which the other has ability to give. Out of every such relation there arises some action or some feeling that connects the two persons, so exactly in the manner of the drawing of a line from the one to the other that we could find no other comparison for it so perfect if we tried; and when we set it before our minds by that figure we cannot help feeling that the straight line represents *right-*

The line of rightness.

ness, in whatever passes between the two men, and that no other line could do so to the satisfaction of our imagination.

Perhaps, if we look further, we can find a reason for this feeling; and I will pursue the search by imagining that I am one of the two persons whose relations or dealings with each other we are trying to represent. I put myself, we will say, in the place of the man A. I suppose myself to be talking with the man B, of some matter on which each wants information from the other. I know nothing of what passes in his mind, except as my own thinking and feeling lead me to believe that his thoughts and feelings must be moved in much the same way.

The line of truth.

I am very clearly conscious of a claim in myself to be told what is true. I feel with absolute certainty that truth is due to me, and that I should be treated very badly if I did not receive it. My reason, moreover, tells me that the information I receive from B will be of no worth to me unless I can trust it to be true. Therefore my own consciousness gives me a clear understanding of what *ought to be* the sole purpose of B's words to me, namely, to carry to me the information that I need and that I can trust when it comes to me. Here we have an idea, of a single purpose giving a single direction to something done, which is exactly parallel to the idea of straightness in the line from B to A. But the line that is straight from

B to A must be equally straight from A to B; and it is impossible for me to understand what *ought to be* in B's words to me without knowing that the same truthfulness *ought to be* in mine to him, since I cannot doubt that he is a being of the same nature as myself, who must therefore have the same needs and claims. I am forced, that is to say, to imagine myself in B's place and he in mine, and to comprehend that his claims on me are, in the nature of things, the same that I make on him.

I reach the same result if I imagine myself to be trading with B, or working for him, or employing his labor, or engaged with him in transactions of any other kind. In my own claims on him — in my sense of what is due to

me from him — I always have that which will draw the Line of Right back-

The invariable Line of Right.

ward and forward between us, in both directions the same, if I use it as I should. I have only to put myself in his place and him in mine, and to think of what would be satisfying honesty, or fairness, or faithfulness, or kindness, or courtesy, coming from him to me, and I learn instantly what must go from me to him, if my conduct is to be RIGHT.

But this, you will say, is nothing, after all, but the GOLDEN RULE, in a new guise. So it is, — the great, wise, wonderful, beautiful, old GOLDEN RULE; it is just that and nothing more. For there *is* nothing more than that. There is nothing to be said about RIGHT and WRONG,

so far as concerns our dealings with one another, that was not summed up ages ago in the simplest and grandest of all commandments: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." It is a command which men found in their consciousness and conscience so early that we do not know when it was first put into words. We find it in the teachings of Confucius, the Chinese apostle of morals, who lived in the sixth century before Christ, and who said to his disciples, "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." We find it also in one of the sacred poems of the ancient Hindus, believed to have been composed about five centuries before Christ,

The Golden Rule.

where it is given in lines of verse which a recent scholar has translated as follows: —

"This is the sum of all true righteousness:
Treat others as thou would'st thyself be treated.
Do nothing to thy neighbor which hereafter
Thou wouldst not have thy neighbor do to thee."

And we have it, as we know it best, in Christ's Sermon on the Mount. But there must have been the sense of it — the instinct of it — as we have seen, in the minds of still earlier men, when they formed the idea of RIGHT, as a quality in itself, and named it with the name they had given already to a stretched, straight line.

II

THE NATURAL IMPULSE TO DO RIGHT, AND OUR FREEDOM TO OBEY OR DISOBEY IT

So far as concerns that part of our conduct which touches other people, — and which is much the larger part, — we find ourselves furnished with the means, in our own minds, of fixing and marking the Line of Right. In other matters of conduct, relating only to ourselves, for example, — to our minds, to our bodies, to our capabilities and aims in life, etc., — we shall see, when we come to consider them, that the reason or principle of RIGHT is much the same.

But if the learning and knowing of

RIGHT from WRONG has been made very easy for us, by the natural working of our thoughts, our imaginations, and our feelings, is there anything in our nature that helps us likewise to *do* the RIGHT when we know it? Unquestionably there is. Unless we destroy it, as we may do, by persisting resistance, we are always conscious of a pull from some feeling within us toward the RIGHT action, and against any departure from it, whenever we give attention to see what the RIGHT action is. We can be heedless of what the RIGHT is, and so escape that pull of feeling to it by mere recklessness of action, or we can feel it and defy it, and overcome it, to our hurt, and to our ruin if we persist; but it is always

there, planted in the depths of our nature, for our moral help, if we are willing to be helped to do RIGHT and not WRONG.

What is it? — that urgent *ought to* and *ought not to* which every human being feels so often, or has felt? We call it "conscience;" but this is only giving a name to something not explained. What is the force in it that we feel? We cannot tell. But if it is a mystery, it is no more so than the mystery of the force which drives every moving body of matter in a straight line of motion, and which resists any other force that would swerve it from the straight line. The boy who turns a corner when he is running swiftly feels the strain of that force. Something in his body resists

the turn, and strives to keep him to the straight run. If he has studied physics in school, he knows that his body is trying to obey what is called a "law of motion," and that is all that science can tell him about it. He knows, too, that when he throws a stone it would move on in a never-bending straight line, if the air did not resist its motion and if gravitation did not pull it down to the earth, with forces that overcome the force with which it was thrown. If he knows that, he knows all that anybody knows about the mysterious impulse in all motions of matter to keep them in the *right line*. We only know it to be a fact of the material universe, which we cannot explain; and we simply mean

The physical law of motion parallel to the moral law of conduct.

that it is invariable when we call it a "law." We know just the same, and no more, about this other mysterious impulse toward a Line of Right in conduct, which we feel in ourselves and call conscience, and which we have to resist when we do Wrong. The two are strangely alike, and one seems to be, as much as the other, a "Law of Nature," for the ordering of the universe in one case, and for the ordering in the other case of the life of man.

But if we are subject to a "law" of *right conduct*, strangely parallel to the "law" of *right motion* which all matter obeys, we are subject to it in a very different way. The stone which a boy has thrown, and the flesh and bones of his body when he runs, are so impelled

to a straight line of motion that they cannot do otherwise than resist any turn from it. They are obedient to the law of their motion without will or choice. It is a law to them which enforces itself. If they are swerved from the *right line* it is by some force that acts, not in them, but upon them, from the outside. But the impulse to *right conduct*, on the contrary, acts in a conscious mind which feels that it has power within itself to obey or disobey, to resist or to yield. We are free to let the impulse give direction to our conduct or not, as we will. It does not compel us to keep ourselves true to the Line of Right in what we do ; it only moves us to remember it, and urges us toward the

Our freedom under the law.

line. It is given us, not to govern us, but to actuate us helpfully in the government of ourselves.

This freedom to do RIGHT or to do WRONG is what stamps on our conduct the character called *moral*, by making it our own. If that freedom is taken away from any act, the *moral* quality of the act is gone. If a man, for example, is compelled by a court of law to pay an honest debt which he would not pay otherwise, the thing done is RIGHT, but there is no *rightness* in the doing of it. The man is a *wrong-doer* so far as his own will is concerned; the *right-doing* is not his own, though the act may seem to be. And so, if the feeling which prompts us to do

Our freedom gives our conduct its moral quality.

RIGHT had power to compel us to do it, there would be no more morality in our conduct than there is morality in the straight flight of a bullet to its mark. There would be no more character in ourselves, and no more dignity and nobility of being, than there is in a machine. It is our moral freedom — our freedom of choice between Good and Evil, RIGHT and WRONG — that dignifies and exalts us among the creatures and creations of God, and nothing else could lift us to the same height. Gifts of intellect are nothing to compare with it. We might, every one of us, have the genius of Shakespeare and Michael Angelo and Julius Cæsar combined in

Our freedom exalts us.

our brains, and, if we had not the power to rule our own actions by our own will, we should be infinitely poorer in the worth of our being than we are now.

III

THE TRUST OF OUR MORAL FREEDOM

THE power of self-government with which we are endowed is not to be called a gift; it is an almost incredible Trust. It not only trusts our own destiny to ourselves, but it actually trusts, or seems to trust, the whole final outcome of God's creative work to our treatment of it. This earth, at least, is put into our hands, to make what we will of it and of ourselves, its inhabitants. It is stored with all possible helps to us, in natural forces and materials; we are given intelligence to find them out and to use them for the enrichment and beautifying of our lives; we are given the understanding of a

Rule of Right in our conduct toward each other that will keep us in perfect harmony and happiness of work together, for the common good; we are drawn toward action in accord with that Rule by a feeling created in us, which will not let us forget it or violate it without willful intent; but (and here is the grandeur of the part we perform in creation) we are trusted with the freedom to do with all this what we will. The outcome, good or evil, is what we and our fellows of the human race, past and future, are helping, or have helped, or will help, to make it. The glory or the shame of triumph or failure in the creation of mankind is to belong to the race itself.

The destiny of man in his own hands.

Now think for a moment what the outcome would be if a time were reached when no human being, young or old, did anything to another which he would not wish to have done to himself! There would be, then, of course, no war, and no need of armies or horrible battleships; there would be no crime, and no need of police, except for helpful service, in dealing with the mishaps of life; there would be little for lawmakers and courts of law to do; there would be no cruelty, no oppression, no hardness of dealing with the unfortunate, no dishonesty, no insolence, no meanness, no discourtesy, little or no quarreling or anger, little or no preventable suffering in the world. This is not a fancy-painted picture of

What might be.

what might be; it is what plain reasoning tells us would come to pass if everybody followed the simple Rule which everybody knows to be the Rule of Right Conduct among men, and which nobody disputes. It would be, in effect, hardly less than the making of this earth into the likeness of heaven, as we imagine heaven to be; and how simply and easily it may be done!

That is to say, how easily each one of us may do his part towards heaven-making on earth; and the adding of part to part might some time produce the celestial whole. The question to each one of us is whether his life shall contribute to that outcome, or be of the number that keep it unattained. Many persons are ambitious to contribute to

the improvement of the world in material ways, — by building canals, or railways, or stately edifices, or by the adornment of cities, all of which are excellent things to do; but one who helps to rid the world of cruelty and rapacity and dishonesty and meanness and rude manners, by simply living a life that has no such thing in it, is making a contribution which surpasses the worth of railways that span continents and of canals that join seas. And this is a gift to the bettering of the world which any of us, young or old, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, can make, by simply doing always what we know that we ought to do.

The easy gift we can make to the bettering of the world.

But doing what we know that we

ought to do is not only for the good of the world, but likewise, and far more, for the good of ourselves. We take infinitely more benefit from our own performance of an act of uprightness, and infinitely more harm from an act of wrong, than the good we bestow or the harm we inflict. The good or ill we do to another in such ways only touches some circumstance of his life ; but the influence which comes back from it to ourselves goes deeply into our nature, — refines or coarsens it, lifts or lowers it, and is either inspiring or deadening to all that is best in soul and mind. If, for example, a man is defrauded, he suffers from an injury done, not really to himself, but to the circumstances of

Effects on ourselves.

his life. It takes something from the comforts of his living, or from his enjoyments, or from his expectations and hopes ; it burdens him, perhaps, with new anxieties and new toils. But, no matter how cruelly his life is troubled by it, the wrong done has only touched and pricked him from the outside. On the other hand, think of the case of him who does the wrong, — who produces it, from evil thoughts and avaricious desires, which he has allowed to grow into a wicked will and a ruthless deed ! If this is his first act of knavery, Nature makes it hateful and hard to him; compels him to feel the degradation of it and the shame. In the moment it is done, he knows that he has made himself a meaner being than

he was before, and he falls forever to a lower level in his own esteem. Then all dishonesties lose half their repugnance to him, and all the defenses of his integrity are half broken down. A second temptation to fraud will find less to overcome in him, and a third still less ; and at last the fallen man will be wholly contented with his place among the predatory creatures of the world, and will slink through life, hunting for prey. Surely he is the greater victim of the wrong !

Such effects on ourselves of what we do are consequent upon our moral freedom, which causes every act of right or wrong doing to be an *exercise* of some trait of character, good or bad, and so invigorates it, as the muscles of

the body are invigorated by the work they do. Thus we become the makers of our own characters, and our freedom to act rightly or wrongly is seen, in that view, to be the highest of all the privileges we enjoy. It is common to call right-doing a *Duty*, and so it is if we give a proper meaning to the word. But our idea of Duty is apt to be the idea of an unwelcome obligation; something to be done which we find more merit in doing because it is disagreeable and hard; and this is an idea which fits no true conception of the doing of Right. The more carefully we consider what that is, in its nature, and what results from it, to ourselves and to the world

The privilege of our freedom to do right.

of mankind at large, the more clearly we can see that when we prefer Right to Wrong we are exercising the most precious of all the *Privileges* of man.

IV

SELF-CONTROL, AND THE FORMATION OF HABIT

Our freedom to choose between Right and Wrong is part of a general power of self-control, or self-government, with which we are nobly endowed. We are animated in our being, we may say, by various forces, not always in agreement, and there is something in us — the something which makes up the "I" and "Me" of each one of us — that has a power of government over them all, to constrain them to work together, to one common end. We may call them forces, because we have no better name; we are only conscious of their action

in us, and know nothing as to what they are. One of them forms ideas in our minds, and compares and combines them, in acts of judgment and reasoning; another sways us with emotions, of love, hatred, anger, and the like; another colors our self-consciousness with feelings of pleasure and pain; a fourth excites us to desires and appetites, stirred in our bodies or in our minds; still another appears in what we call Will, which manifests itself in every act, but which nobody can even describe in a satisfactory way; and, lastly, we find the moral impulse which urges us toward Right Conduct, when we have seen intelligently what *is* Right. It may be that these are only differing forms of one intellectual force, just as

heat, light, and electricity are differing forms of one physical force; but they seem to animate us separately, and some of them act often in strong conflict with others. Our passions and desires, especially, are often in conflict with our judgment, pressing us to do things, or to say things, or to give way to feelings, which the latter advises us against, and which it prompts the moral impulse to resist.

Forces in conflict.

Now, somewhere, in or over these more or less conflicting forces which animate our being, there is something that can rule them to order and agreement and make them obey. I prefer to believe that the something in question is not *in* them, but *over* them, and that,

for me, it is what I feel to be my *self*. This is sometimes disputed by people who do not believe that the judgments, passions, desires, and will of a man are overruled at all, by any supreme authority in his being that can bring them under control. They maintain that our state of being is a state without government — a state of anarchy — in which the animating forces, as we have called them, are left struggling together until the weaker submit to the stronger, and that the outcome of conduct and character, in all persons, is just what happens to result. But this is a view which brings man into contempt, as a worthless, poor creature, endowed with nothing that differs very much from the springs and clock-wheels in such

puppets as are made for the amusement of a child. If we give attention to the working of our own minds, we know that it is not true. We know it by proofs in our consciousness which outweigh any argument that can be brought. Whenever we choose to do so we can *feel* a power in ourselves to master any passion, any appetite or desire, any dread of pain, any careless habit or indolence of thinking, any indifference of will. We can *feel* a power to strengthen or to weaken any one of the forces in ourselves that act in producing thought, passion, desire, or will. We can *feel* that they are our servants if we will make them so; but feel, too, at the same time, that our mastery over them can easily be given up.

We are not puppets.

It is lost, in fact, more easily than it is kept. The government of ourselves is like the government of human societies, in which the strength and firmness of authority must never fail. But they do fail if unceasing energy and watchfulness are not exercised in maintaining them, and the state of anarchy appears, then, at once.

If, therefore, we are not by nature the kind of puppet creatures that we should be if we had no power of self-control, we can easily sink ourselves to the likeness of creatures of that worthless sort. It is as easy as any indolence, or any carelessness, or any yielding and drifting in life; and the temptations to it, from what seem to be pleasure and com-

But we can be puppet-like.

fort, are often hard to resist. But what pleasure can make us willing to be shamed by so discrowning and dethroning ourselves from the sovereignty of our own being, and submitting to be slaves of the sensibilities that we were appointed to rule? What can make it worth being a Man, and not an insect or a worm, if one has no mastery over the endowments of the Man?

The self-mastering of passions and dispositions of body and mind is far harder for some than for others, being made so by surrounding influences or by inherited weaknesses and traits; but we have no reason to believe that it was ever made impossible to any man. On the contrary, we have numberless examples to show

Self-mastery never impossible.

us that all imaginable weaknesses and all imaginable pressures of circumstance or disposition can be and have been overcome; and they leave no ground for any person to plead that self-control is beyond his power. If he acts as a puppet in life it is not because he was made so, but because he has been more willing to play the easy part of a puppet than to strive stoutly and valiantly for a freedom which proved hard to win.

No man was ever born with an evil appetite or passion too strong for him to master. It may grow to that strength if he indulges it; he may be vanquished and enslaved by it in the end, because he carelessly gave way to it in the beginning; but it overcomes him then

as a HABIT, of his own growing, — a tyrant of his own making; and blame for the loss of his moral freedom lies on none but himself. There is no other fact concerning Man which needs so much as this to be impressed on our thoughts while we are young, and while most of the habits of our lives are being formed and fixed. If we could only be made to know in youth what we have to learn in later years, of the mighty power, beyond all estimate or description, which Habits grow to in our characters, and of the completeness with which the making and aiming of them is in our own hands at the beginning, we could never let them heedlessly spring up.

Habits, and their power.

Most of our infancy and childhood is

spent in the making of Habits, good and bad, without consciousness in ourselves of the fact. Our education is a process of habit-making, and not much more. The action of nerves and the movement of muscles by which we balance our bodies and swing them forward, first on one leg, then on the other, in walking, only ceased to be difficult when we had practiced them enough to make them habits of direction in the brain joined to habits of motion in the limbs. So, too, with the complicated working together of brain, tongue, lips, lungs, and larynx, in speech, or of brain, arms, and fingers, in writing, in piano-playing, and in all dexterous kinds of work: it is only by a laborious cultivation of Habit that

Habit-making in childhood.

those difficult things are made easy to do. Habits of that class are so absolutely necessary in life that parents are compelled to give some attention to the cultivation of them in the young, and the young cannot very well fail to understand the importance of the matter to themselves; but even these are so much slighted in the cultivation that what we call "careless habits of speech," for example, are commoner than the pure articulation and pronunciation and the careful choice of words that could just as easily be fixed in the Habit of our talk.

"The great thing in all education," says Professor James in his "Psychology," "is to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy. It is to

fund and capitalize our acquisitions, and live at ease upon the interest of the fund. For this we must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can, and guard against the growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us, as we should guard against the plague."

Habits of carefulness instead of carelessness in seeing things, to see them wholly and not partly, and to be correct in our knowledge of them; habits of carefulness in our thinking, to be sure of distinctness in the ideas out of which we form opinions and beliefs; habits of careful attention to what we wish to remember, and to the good order in memory that will keep it

ready for use: these may be acquired just as easily as the Habits of the heedless eye, the loose thought, and the haphazard memory, which are so much commoner in the world. That is, we may acquire them just as easily in the early years of life, when the ways of the working of our minds are being worn into the grooves we call Habit; but when the grooves have once been worn, then all changes from carelessness to carefulness are very hard. So it is, likewise, with the movements of feeling that are excitable in our minds, — with anger, impatience, fear, sympathy, desire, vanity, indolence, for example: they are all equally subject to the Habits of rational restraint and rational cultivation,

Habit-cultivation.

on one hand, or to the Habits of reckless indulgence and neglect, on the other, which we form in the great Habit-making time of our youth. Then, and then only, can Anger be trained to a Habit of waiting for Reason to approve it, and Fear to a Habit of leaning on Pride, and Vanity to a Habit of remembering its own emptiness. *Then, and then only!* That is the terrible fact. Few men reach old age without saying sadly, "Oh, that I could live my life over!" because time has shown them their misuse of the opportunities of their youth for a different development of themselves and a different shaping of their lives. If, by some startling revelation, the young could

The terrible fact.

be made to realize the stupendous importance of those golden opportunities before wasting them, instead of waking to the realization when it is too late, the effect on mankind would be like the creation of a new race.

EXAMPLES AND OPINIONS

FRANKLIN'S PLAN OF HABIT-CULTIVATION. Benjamin Franklin saw early in life that he might make himself what he wished to be, by a careful cultivation of desirable habits, and by a persistent breaking of those that did him harm. He gave his best thought to the subject, and framed a remarkable plan of self-cultivation and self-control, which he carried out with great success. It is described very fully in his autobiography, and must have prompted many young people since to attempt the same training of habit in themselves. He

began, he tells us, by endeavoring "to live without committing any fault," but soon found that he had undertaken more than he could do. "While my care was employed in guarding against one fault," he writes, "I was often surprised by another; habit took the advantage of inattention; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason. I concluded, at length, . . . that the contrary habits must be broken, and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct." For this purpose he contrived his notable method, first making a careful list of the moral virtues, thirteen in number, which seemed to call for especial cultivation. "My intention," said Franklin, "being to acquire the *habitude* of all these virtues, I judged it would be well not to distract my attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix it on one of them at a time; and, when I should be master of that,

then to proceed to another, and so on, till I should have gone through the thirteen; and, as the previous acquisition of some might facilitate the acquisition of certain others, I arranged them with that view. . . . Temperance first, as it tends to procure that coolness and clearness of head which is so necessary where constant vigilance was to be kept up, and guard maintained against the unremitting attraction of ancient habits, and the force of perpetual temptations. This being acquired and established, Silence would be more easy; and my desire being to gain knowledge at the same time that I improved in virtue, and considering that in conversation it was obtained rather by the use of the ears than of the tongue, and therefore wishing to break a habit I was getting into of prattling, punning, and joking, which only made me acceptable to trifling company, I gave Silence the second place. This and the next, Order, I expected

would allow me more time for attending to my project and my studies. Resolution, once become habitual, would keep me firm in my endeavors to obtain all the subsequent virtues; Frugality and Industry, freeing me from my remaining debt, and producing affluence and independence, would make more easy the practice of Sincerity and Justice, etc., etc. Conceiving then that, agreeably to the advice of Pythagoras in his Golden Verses, daily examination would be necessary, I contrived the following method for conducting that examination. I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues. I ruled each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. I crossed these columns with thirteen red lines, marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues, on which line, and in its proper column, I might mark, by a

little black spot, every fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day. . . . I determined to give a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively. . . . Proceeding thus to the last, I could go through a course complete in thirteen weeks, and four courses in a year. And like him who, having a garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad herbs at once, which would exceed his reach and his strength, but works on one of the beds at a time, . . . so I should have, I hoped, the encouraging pleasure of seeing on my pages the progress I made in virtue, by clearing successively my lines of their spots. . . . I entered upon the execution of this plan for self-examination, and continued it with occasional intermissions for some time. I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined; but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish. . . . After a while I

went through one course only in a year, and afterward only one in several years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employed in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered; but I always carried my little book with me. . . . It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owed the constant felicity of his life, down to his seventy-ninth year, in which this is written."

THE SELF-MASTERY OF SOCRATES. Xenophon, who wrote the Memoirs of Socrates, the wisest and noblest of the Greeks, says of him: "He was so frugal that I doubt whether there is any man whose labor would not earn for him as much as satisfied Socrates. He took only such food as he could consume with a relish, and sat down to table prepared to make his appetite for his meal the sauce to season it withal. All kinds of drink

were agreeable to him, because he never drank unless he was thirsty." In another place Xenophon says: "He drew no distinction between wisdom and temperance, for he considered a man who knew what was honorable and good, and how to practice it, and who, recognizing what was base, had the power to withstand it, to be both wise and temperate. Being asked whether he esteemed those who, knowing what was their duty, acted in opposition to that knowledge, as wise, he said: 'I regard such people as foolish and intemperate characters; for I suppose that every one, in every case in which it is possible for him to do so, chooses that which he thinks will be best for him.' . . . He asserted that the opposite of wisdom was insanity, but he did not reckon ignorance as insanity." Socrates is quoted further by Xenophon as saying: "In what respect does an intemperate man differ from the most ignorant brute? For if any

one, instead of regarding his highest interests, seeks invariably to avail himself of any pleasure that comes within his reach, what distinction is there between his conduct and that of the most unreasoning beasts?"

One of the Sayings of Marcus Aurelius. In the little book of "Thoughts" or "Meditations," written by the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, one of the purest and noblest men who ever lived, we find this: "If thou findest in human life anything better than justice, truth, temperance, fortitude, and, in a word, anything better than thy own mind's self-satisfaction in the things which it enables thee to do according to right reason, and in the condition that is assigned to thee without thy own choice; if, I say, thou seest anything better than this, turn to it with all thy soul, and enjoy that which thou hast found to be best. But if nothing appears to be better than the Deity which is planted in thee,

which has subjected to itself all thy appetites, and, as Socrates said, has detached itself from the persuasions of sense, and has submitted itself to the gods, and cares for mankind; if thou findest everything else smaller and of less value than this, give place to nothing else."

How Faraday acquired Sweetness and Gentleness. Professor Tyndall, in his little book on "Faraday as a Discoverer," wrote: "We have heard much of Faraday's gentleness and sweetness and tenderness. It is all true, but it is very incomplete. . . . Underneath his sweetness and gentleness was the heat of a volcano. He was a man of excitable and fiery nature; but through high self-discipline he had converted the fire into a central glow and motive power of life, instead of permitting it to waste itself in useless passion. 'He that is slow to anger,' saith the sage, 'is greater than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' Faraday was *not* slow

to anger, but he completely ruled his own spirit, and thus, though he took no cities, he captivated all hearts."

THE POWER OF SELF-CONTROL A DEVELOPMENT. In a child of six months "no desire or tendency is stopped by a mental act. At a year old, the rudiments of the great faculty of self-control are clearly apparent in most children. They will resist the desire to seize the gas-flame, they will not upset the milk-jug, they will obey orders to sit still when they want to run about, all through a higher mental inhibition. But the power of control is just as gradual a development as the motions of the hands." — T. S. CLOUSTON, *Lectures on Mental Diseases* (quoted by Professor William James in his *Principles of Psychology*).

SPINNING OUR OWN FATES. "Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day. That is, be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary

points; do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test. Asceticism of this sort is like the insurance which a man pays on his house and goods. The tax does him no good at the time, and possibly may never bring him a return. But if the fire does come, his having paid it will be his salvation from ruin. So with the man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial in unnecessary things. He will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him, and when his softer fellow mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast. . . . Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil,

and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or vice leaves its never so little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, 'I won't count this time.' Well, he may not count it, and a kind Heaven may not count it; but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve-cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course this has its good side as well as its bad one. As we become permanent drunkards by so many separate drinks, so we become saints in the moral, and experts in the practical and scientific spheres, by so many separate acts and hours of work." — WILLIAM JAMES, *Psychology (Abridgment of Principles of Psychology)*, p. 149.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WILL. "'To will'

(in the highest sense of the word) is . . . the result of a development; it is something which no one can do at the beginning of mental life, but which all men learn to do in the course of its unfolding. To exercise 'free will' — in any conceivable meaning of this term — is not a birthright; it is rather an achievement which different individuals make in greatly differing degrees." — G. T. LADD, *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory*, ch. xxvi.

V

CONFUSED NOTIONS OF RIGHT AND WRONG, AND THEIR PRINCIPAL CAUSES

NOTHING is easier in most circumstances than to see what will be Right and what Wrong, in any choice we have to make between two courses of action; and yet most of the wrong-doing of the world is probably done with no clear understanding that it *is* Wrong. Not many people really *mean* to do Wrong. Not many, that is, know clearly that they are turning away from the Line of Right and going wrongly when they take that course. On the other hand, not many, perhaps, really *try* to know what is Right, in order

that they may do it with certainty and make no mistake. The greater number seem to give little thought to the matter, and their notions of Right are so vague as to be easily confused and misled. They prefer Right to Wrong, and a general intention to be guided by it is in their minds; but the intention is not earnest enough to make them careful and exact. They run no lines of moral survey for themselves, to lay out their courses in life, but carelessly follow beaten paths. They are satisfied, in other words, to be "as nearly Right as other people," — the "other people" being mostly as careless on the subject as themselves. Thus imperfect notions or standards of Right and Wrong get thoughtlessly

Thoughtlessness on the subject.

accepted, and become established in common practice so widely that more wrong-doing appears to result from them than from all the willful wickedness of the world.

For this reason, it seems to be more necessary to persuade people to give careful consideration to questions of Right and Wrong, and to frame distinct rules in their own minds for the guidance of their conduct, than it is to persuade them to prefer the Right. We have seen already how simple a subject it is, and how small a degree of intelligence is required for grasping every idea with which it has to do. The false notions that confuse it are just as plain, too, in their falsity, when examined, as the true notions are plainly true. Many

that were most misleading in former times have been practically cleared from men's minds by the mere changing of their habits of view, as their dealings with each other have widened out. In the early days of human society a man learned first to see that others in his own tribe were beings like himself, who could claim from him the same treatment which he claimed from them. These were his fellow men; all others seemed different to him. Men not of his own tribe were strangers, and to be a stranger was quite certainly to be an enemy. Hence, most, if not all, of his first notions of Right and Wrong in dealing with other people extended only to the people of his own tribe. He could see it to be

Tribal notions.

Wrong to take their lives or their property, or to harm them otherwise, long before he could think it Wrong to kill or rob the strange people of other tribes. In time, this tribal notion of Right and Wrong got slowly enlarged in various directions and in various ways, by the union of kindred tribes into nations, or by the spreading of common religions, which multiplied the number of people whom each man could feel human fellowship with, and so recognize as having moral claims on himself.

That process has been going on through centuries, until now it can be said that nearly all the hedges which used to grow high between people of different nations, different races, different religions, to keep them from feel-

ing that they were fellow men, of like nature and having like claims on each other, are going to decay. The one which seems hardest to destroy is the hedge of color, between white men and black, or yellow, or brown. There was a time when slavery was one of the commonest iniquities of the world. Any mode of capture, anywhere, which supplied the slave markets with desirable men, women, and children, was winked at by the moral feeling of that age. Then there came a feeling, among the peoples most advanced in civilization, that only savages or captives taken in war could rightly be made slaves. In the next growth of moral enlightenment on the

Views of slavery, for example.

subject, no enslaving of a white man was approved by the white races, but the black man might still be caught and sold to a white master with no sense of Wrong being done. Finally, at the present time, all slavery of human beings, black or white, is condemned by the general opinion of mankind. The most important of the workings of what we call civilization, — of Christian civilization especially, — is seen in this. It has been slowly bringing the different peoples of the earth to a knowledge of each other which compels them to see that every man is the fellow of every other, alike in nature, alike in moral claims, and that when the Golden Rule of Right

between any two has been found, it must be the Rule of Right for every two and for all.

The most serious cause of mistake and confusion in the moral perceptions of mankind is being thus slowly removed; but another, hardly less mischievous, remains in full force. This latter is found in the view which many people take of the Laws by which they are humanly governed; the Laws, that is, of their nation or state. They seem to think that these are sufficient rules of conduct for the right guidance of the subjects of the state in their dealing with one another. They accept them as standards of sound morality, and feel, no doubt, that they are entirely righteous if they

Mischievous notions of law.

live up to the requirements of the Law which their legislatures and courts have set forth. No idea could be more destructive of a true understanding of Right and Wrong. These Laws which our courts enforce, not only are not meant to be moral rules, but they could not, by any possibility, have that character or quality given to them. Nobody can frame directions that will tell us, in every case of our dealing with another, what conduct is called for by the Golden Rule. As a little thought will show us, each case raises a question which the person concerned must settle for himself. The man A, in our diagram on page 9, must learn from his own consciousness the Line of Right Conduct which he claims

from B, in order to give a true moral aim in his own conduct towards B. In no other way can his action be rightly fitted to its circumstances; in no other way can it be a moral act of his own. If his line of conduct is simply that which the Law lays down, and which its courts can compel him to follow, it is not his own, and therefore, as we have seen, there can be little or no morality in his obedience to it, no matter how Right it may be.

Since it is plainly true that not many of these Laws of human making would be needed if every man did to others as he would have them do to him, it follows that most of them are made solely for the coercion of people who will not learn for themselves what is

Right, and do it of their own accord. It is not the object of the Law to instruct or guide those who wish to act rightly, that being impossible, as was said before. The best that legislatures and courts can do is to roughly mark lines that shall be somewhat nearly Lines of Right, for various classes of dealings between people one or both of whom need to be forced to do what is Right. Therefore one who takes guidance from the Law is not morally guided at all; he is only kept from going Wrong beyond a certain line.

The object of human law.

For example, there are hundreds of circumstances in which a man may owe a debt of some description that is not exactly set forth in any Law, and

which he cannot be compelled to pay. There are just as many circumstances, too, in which he may get possession of property that does not justly belong to him, but which there is a failure of Law to compel him to restore. If he looks into his own mind for the Rule of Right to direct his conduct in such a case, and imagines himself changed in place with the other party concerned, he is sure to feel and know what his own claim of Right would be, and to understand that the due of Right from him is settled by that. But if, with moral carelessness, he has fallen into the practice of leaving questions of Right and Wrong to be settled for him by lawyers and courts, instead of form-

Legal honesty not moral honesty.

ing and cultivating the habit of appeal to the Golden Rule, applied by his own moral sense, he commits a great Wrong, half understanding, perhaps, that it is so, but believing, or trying to believe, that the Law is responsible for it, and not himself. A large part of the wrong-doing of the world comes from this deplorable source.

EXAMPLES AND OPINIONS

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S EXAMPLE IN THE PAYMENT OF A DEBT FAR BEYOND THE REQUIREMENTS OF LAW. The publishing house of Ballantyne & Co., of Edinburgh, was forced to stop business in 1826, owing an immensely large debt. Sir Walter Scott, who had invested money in the business and become a partner, was legally liable for this debt to the extent of all the property which

he then possessed, and no more. "But," says his son-in-law and biographer, Mr. Lockhart, "he regarded the embarrassment of his commercial firm, on the whole, with the feelings not of a merchant but of a gentleman. He thought that by devoting the rest of his life to the service of his creditors he could, in the upshot, pay the last farthing he owed them. . . . Nor had Sir Walter calculated wrongly. He paid the penalty of health and life, but he saved his honor and his self-respect." Between January, 1826, and January, 1828, by prodigious labors in writing and by selling the copyright in his books, he paid off nearly £40,000 ($200,000) of the great debt, and wrote in his diary: "I might have employed the money I have made since the insolvency . . . in compounding my debts. But I could not have slept sound, as I now can, under the comfortable impression of receiving the thanks of my creditors, and the

conscious feeling of discharging my duty as a man of honor and honesty. I see before me a long, tedious, and dark path, but it leads to stainless reputation. If I die in the harrows, as is very likely, I shall die with honor; if I achieve my task, I shall have the thanks of all concerned, and the approbation of my own conscience." At his death, in 1832 (broken down by incessant labor), no less than £54,000 ($270,000) of the debt remained still to be paid; but moneys received on the insurance of his life, and advances made by publishers on future sales of his writings, enabled his executors to clear it entirely away.

THE SIMILAR EXAMPLE SET BY GEORGE W. CURTIS. George William Curtis, one of the most delightful of American writers and one of the noblest of men, became in middle life a partner with others in the publication of "Putnam's Monthly Magazine," which failed. Mr. Curtis felt called upon, by his own sense of

right, to make good the loss to creditors, and accordingly he assumed a large indebtedness, "for which," says his biographer, Mr. Edward Cary, "he was not legally bound;" and for nearly twenty years he labored incessantly to pay it, devoting to that purpose the money which he earned by lecturing, from city to city, throughout the United States. The cost to him of this long and patient undertaking was not only heavy labor, "but much hardship and exposure, much sacrifice of the joys of a home peculiarly dear, and the almost complete abandonment of scholarly pursuits to which he had looked with longing." This "was done in the quiet and unquestioning obedience to the law of simple, manly fidelity that was a law of his nature, and as integral a part of it as his kindness of heart and gentleness of manners."

A Merchant's Experience. It is related of Mr. Samuel Appleton, formerly an

eminent merchant of Boston, that he was asked on one occasion his opinion of the general honesty of mankind. "Very favorable," he replied; "very generally, I think they *mean* to be honest. I have never in my life met with more than three or four cases in which I thought a man *intended* to be dishonest with me."

WHAT RUSKIN THOUGHT OF EVERYBODY'S ABILITY TO KNOW ALWAYS WHAT IS RIGHT. The following is from a dialogue between a teacher and his pupils on the subject of our ability to know what is Right and what is Wrong. It is taken from Mr. John Ruskin's little book entitled "The Ethics of the Dust," in which many moral lessons suggested by the structure and formation of crystals are finely and beautifully discussed.

Mary. Must not one repent when one does wrong, and hesitate when one can't see one's way?

L. You have no business at all to do wrong; nor to get into any way that you cannot see. Your intelligence should always be far in advance of your act. Whenever you do not know what you are about you are sure to be doing wrong.

Kathleen. Oh, dear, but I never know what I am about!

L. Very true, Katie, but it is a great deal to know, if you know that. And you find that you have done wrong afterwards; and perhaps some day you may begin to know, or at least think, what you are about.

Isabel. But surely people can't do very wrong if they don't know, can they? I mean, they can't be very naughty. They can be wrong, like Kathleen or me, when we make mistakes; but not wrong in the dreadful way. I can't express what I mean; but there are two sorts of wrong, are there not?

L. Yes, Isabel; but you will find that the

great difference is between kind and unkind wrongs, not between meant and unmeant wrong. Very few people really mean to do wrong, — in a deep sense, none. They only don't know what they are about. . . .

May. But if people do as well as they can see how, surely that is the Right for them, is n't it?

L. No, May, not a bit of it; Right is Right, and Wrong is Wrong. It is only the fool who does Wrong, and says he "did it for the best." And if there 's one sort of person in the world that the Bible speaks harder of than another, it is fools. . . .

May. But surely nobody can always know what is Right?

L. Yes, you always can, for to-day; and if you do what you see of it to-day, you will see more of it, and more clearly, to-morrow.

VI

INTEGRITY — HONOR — HONESTY

In many of the words that we use to express moral ideas we find something to think about if we trace them back to the older uses they had, and see what their moral meaning was when it shaped itself first in men's minds. The word INTEGRITY, for example, stands for a great deal in our language at the present day. It brings up in us a large, general, rather vague idea of moral character, which is apt to flit through our thoughts without ever becoming quite distinct. But in the beginning it carried as simple, as clear, and as well defined a notion as ever

took form in the thinking of mankind. It was borrowed for our English speech from the Latin, where it came from the word *integer*, meaning untouched, unbroken, *whole*. In that sense it was taken to represent anything that can be thought of as unimpaired and complete in the perfection of itself. We can use it properly in no other sense.

Integrity is wholeness.

But the idea of *wholeness* is identical with the idea of *health*. The two words *whole* and *health* show two sides of the same meaning, having grown into use from the same root, far back in the early word-making of our speech. The first thought in them was the thought of a condition in something (no matter what) which can

be changed to another less perfect state. But that is a change which one cannot help feeling is in an unnatural direction, being made by injury, or by taking some part of the thing away. The state of *wholeness* or *health* in anything seemed, therefore, to be its natural state, — the condition in which it ought to be. If our English language had all grown up from the old Germanic stock that gave us these words *whole* and *health*, we should now be using one or the other of them, no doubt, to express what we mean when we speak of a "man of Integrity." As it is, they help to show us what meaning the word was intended to bear in our minds, by those forefathers of ours

Wholeness is health.

who took the Latin word for *wholeness*, instead of their own, for use in a moral sense. The man of Integrity is a man who morally is in the state of *health*, — in the natural state of his being, — in the condition which ought to be. The desire which actuates his conduct is the desire to know and to do what is Right, to his fellows and himself. He exercises and cultivates his perception of Right, and his will to choose it, in all the aims and actions of his life. He is the man of Integrity because he tries to perfect his moral being, making the most and best of the nature with which he is endowed.

The man of integrity.

We describe such a man in another way when we say that he has "a high

sense of honor," or that he is "honorable," or that he is an "honest man." We do so, that is, if we use the words HONOR and HONEST with a due sense of what they mean. The true idea expressed in the word Honor is that of an exalted tribute of respect and reverence, paid to some object of surpassing nobility and worth. Therefore, a truly "high sense of Honor" in a man's mind is a high feeling of self-respect. It is the feeling of one who so esteems himself that his whole nature shrinks from wrong-doing as a cleanly hand shrinks from the touch of filth. He *honors* himself too much to be lowered willingly in his own consciousness by any act that seems base — mean — Wrong. The

The "sense of honor" is self-respect.

same high sense of what is due to his own dignity of being will justly forbid him to submit willingly to wrong-doing from others; but that can never be so urgent in a truly *honorable* mind as the repulsion which keeps it from any base prompting in itself. There is nothing that even resembles a real "sense of Honor" in the shallow self-conceit which hurries men to retaliate and "avenge" some insult or slight. This is coming to be seen much more generally than it used to be, and the barbaric state of mind that formerly, in all countries, made dueling a so-called "affair of honor," prevails in few regions now. More and more, as people are brought to think carefully of such matters, it will be seen that a

man's Honor is harmed very slightly by any offense he can receive from another, compared with the incurable wounding and staining that it suffers from the least baseness in his own acts.

Honest and Honesty are very common words in our every-day talk; but we do not always use them with the full meaning they ought to have. When we say that a man is Honest we should expect it to be understood that we believe him to be a man who is careful of his Honor, in all that he does, says, and thinks. But we often do call men Honest who are only careful to do nothing contrary to Law, or to the common practice or opinion of the

The honest man.

community in which they live. That gives a most unworthy meaning to the word, and disfigures the great idea of self-reverence and respect which it ought to carry to our minds, and which we cannot afford to lose. The truly Honest man not only *does* what is Right for his own sake, and strives always to be sure in his knowledge of it, but he strives to think Right thoughts and to feel Right feelings. He is as Honest to himself as to others. He sees that it is as much against his Honor to deceive himself, or to allow himself to be led astray in his opinions or beliefs by careless thinking, or by unnecessary ignorance, as it is against his Honor to mislead other men. In this case he is con-

sidering the Line of Right between his whole self, as an intelligent, free being, made up of reason, will, and feeling, on one side, and that part of himself, on the other, which thinks; and he finds a claim on his own thought that is like the claim to truth which he makes on other men. He brings, then, all the forces of his being into action to fulfill the claim, and to be, therefore, true to himself. He stimulates and enlightens his thinking, to the utmost of his ability; disciplines his passions and feelings; strengthens his will; trains his habits; and so makes *Rightness*, in belief, inclination, and action, the chief end of his life. That, and no less than

Honesty to oneself.

that, makes the character of a really Honest Man.

EXAMPLES AND OPINIONS

THE HONESTY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Abraham Lincoln, when he practiced law in Illinois, got the familiar name among the people of "Honest Old Abe," and was looked upon as the typical Honest Man. What won him this name and reputation was described by Judge Drummond, one of the judges of the courts in which Mr. Lincoln practiced, as follows: "He never intentionally misrepresented the evidence of a witness nor the argument of an opponent. He met both squarely, and if he could not explain the one or answer the other, substantially admitted it. He never misstated the law, according to his own intelligent view of it." This is quoted by Messrs. Nicolay and Hay, in their great life of Lin-

coln, and they add that he always avoided a cause which he thought to be wrong "when he could consistently with the rules of his profession. He would often persuade a fair-minded litigant of the injustice of his case and induce him to give it up. His partner, Mr. Herndon, relates a speech in point which Lincoln once made to a man who offered him an objectionable case: 'Yes, there is no reasonable doubt that I can gain your case for you. I can set a whole neighborhood at loggerheads; I can distress a widowed mother and her six fatherless children, and thereby get for you six hundred dollars, which rightfully belongs, it appears to me, as much to them as it does to you. I shall not take your case, but I will give a little advice for nothing. You seem a sprightly, energetic man. I would advise you to try your hand at making six hundred dollars in some other way.'"

Degrees of Honesty. "Many are they

who are capable of being honest because dishonesty is an injury to a fellow; a less number are honest because honesty is a duty. . . . Fewer still are they who are honest because they would scorn to smirch themselves with baseness, and who dread the remorse of seeming mean in their own eyes. But very few indeed are they who are honest with no thought of any consequence, near or remote, external or entirely within themselves; who love to dwell with honesty as they love to inhabit a region of exquisite beauty, or to linger amid the fairest creations of genius, solely because these are in themselves delightful." — A. SUTHERLAND, *The Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct*, ch. xvii. (v. 2.)

EMERSON ON THE EFFECT OF PUTTING TEN DISHONEST MERCHANTS IN THE PLACE OF TEN HONEST ONES. In his essay on "Wealth" Emerson says: "If you take out of State Street [Boston] the ten honestest

merchants and put in ten roguish persons controlling the same amount of capital, the rates of insurance will indicate it; the soundness of banks will show it; the highways will be less secure; the schools will feel it, the children will bring home their little dose of the poison; the judge will sit less firmly on the bench, and his decisions will be less upright; he has lost so much support and constraint, which all need; and the pulpit will betray it, in a laxer rule of life. An apple-tree, if you take out every day for a number of days a load of loam and put in a load of sand about its roots, will find it out. An apple-tree is a stupid kind of creature, but if this treatment be pursued for a short time I think it would begin to mistrust something. And if you should take out of the powerful class engaged in trade a hundred good men and put in a hundred bad, or, what is just the same thing, introduce a demoralizing in-

stitution, would not the dollar, which is not much stupider than an apple-tree, presently find it out? The value of a dollar is social, as it is created by society. Every man who removes into this city with any purchasable talent or skill in him, gives to every man's labor in the city a new worth. If a talent is anywhere born into the world, the community of nations is enriched; and much more with a new degree of probity."

VII

RIGHT AND WRONG IN "BUSINESS"

ALL the dealings among people which bear the general name of "Business" are supposed to form part of a great system of arrangements for exchanging labor, to the end that each person may have the help of many, in the different kinds of work which our comfort and happiness demand, instead of being left to do everything for himself. The sole reason for buying anything from another, instead of making or trying to make it for oneself, and the sole reason for producing things to sell to others, instead of producing only for one's own wants, is

found, of course, in the convenience and benefit resulting to everybody from such a division and exchange of the work of the world. For the same reason, and no other, buyers and sellers are willing to pay profits, interest on capital, commissions, etc., to merchants, shippers, bankers, and other "middlemen" in commerce, who manage and conduct the exchange. In other words, the whole arrangement of what we call "business" is one of *reciprocity*, expected to be profitable and beneficial to all concerned.

But the principle of *reciprocity* (which means, literally, a movement backwards and forwards) is the principle of the Golden Rule ; and when the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, gave

that Rule to his disciples he is said to have described it by a word which signifies *reciprocity* in the language that he used. Hence, the natural, expected, rightful working of all trade, all industrial dealing, all "business," is on the backward and forward straight line of the Golden Rule, and the spirit natural to it is one that would strive to make it beneficial to all, so that its purpose may be always fulfilled. Any other disposition in trade, or in occupations connected with trade, makes it a sham and a falsity, pretending to be what it is not, and needing to be rooted out of the world.

The spirit natural to trade.

If all trade could go on between near neighbors and friends, and no others,

this fact would be kept more in mind than it is. In so small a circle of dealings the claim of each to equal benefits from the arrangement of exchange would then make itself constantly heard, and none could lose very easily the sense of being bound, both in honor (self-respect) and by self-interest, to give to others the good value he would have them give to him, — which is the Golden Rule in its commercial form. But our dealings are with all the ends of the earth, what goes from us being scattered through every continent, and what returns to us coming from a thousand unknown hands, of every color and race; and this seems to cause people to lose sight very often of what would be plain to them if buyer and seller were

not so far apart. In many minds the operations of industrial commerce are, apparently, never thought of as belonging to a great beneficent system of exchanges among the people of the earth, by the working of which they seek together to make the most of their labor, and to obtain from it the largest good. To such minds, on the contrary, the world's "business" seems to be looked on as having the nature of a barbaric scramble, for the most that can be snatched out of other hands, giving up as little as possible in return. If this view and practice came to be general, trade would cease, and with it civilization would come to an end.

A beneficent system, or a barbaric scramble?

To say that the expected result — the

proper and *right* result — from every transaction that belongs truly to the industrial and commercial "business" of the world is beneficial to all the parties engaged in it, is not to say that failures of that result are caused by wrong-doing alone. Mistakes, miscalculations, accidents, and thousands of the circumstances in life that cannot be foreseen, are constantly interfering with the complicated exchanges of mankind, to make some people losers, through no fault on the part of those who gain. How far in such cases the gainers can rightly take the full advantage thrown into their hands is a question to be settled by the Golden Rule, applied by each man for himself. But nothing that happens in this way is treacherous to the under-

standing and expectation of fair trade, while that treachery is practiced in every smallest fraud. To make and market things which are not what they seem to be, by adulteration, by scamped work, or by false labeling, is not only to steal and to lie, but it is to be guilty of an infamous treason against the system of industrial exchange which upholds the civilization of the world. That is the actual nature of a detestable kind of crime which seems to increase in the manufacturing and trading of the world, and which is treated too leniently by public opinion as well as by law.

The treachery of fraud.

For conduct in "business" dealings there seem to be two Golden Rules, — one positive (as stated already), *To*

give to others the good value you would have them give to you; the other negative, *To take no gain that is got by* MAKING *another suffer loss.* The former is not likely to be questioned; but the latter may be, for it condemns dealings of an immensely large class, which great numbers of people are assuming to be either entirely Right, or no more than slightly Wrong. Betting, for example, is a transaction of the nature referred to, in its simplest form. That one should gain from a bet, it is *necessary* that the other should lose. His gain is *made by* the other's loss. The loss is an intended consequence of the gain. In this respect the transfer of property or money from one person

The two Golden Rules of business.

to another occurs precisely as it does by theft. But the loser of a bet has consented in advance to his loss, while the loser by a theft has not ; and this important difference of circumstance is supposed by many people to cleanse the betting transaction of all wrong. But does it ? What is a bet but an agreement between two persons that one shall be allowed to despoil the other of a given sum of money, and that some uncertain or chance happening — in a horse-race or a game of cards, perhaps — shall decide which is to be the despoiler and which the despoiled? The loser has consented in advance to submit to the spoliation — but why ? Simply because he hoped and felt sure that the spoil would come to

Betting and gambling.

himself. The motive of the bet on both sides was that hope, which is plainly as immoral, as contrary to Right, as any motive in human conduct can be. The loser makes no gift of the money he has lost; he yields it under the compulsion of ill-luck. If he had yielded it to the compulsion of a pistol the real nature of his loss would have been the same; but he himself, in that case, would have had no partnership in the wrong-doing of the affair. As it is, he has made himself accessory to the Wrong, which does not better it in the moral view.

If this is rightly reasoned (and where is there a flaw in the reasoning?), it condemns all gaming for money; but it goes much farther than that. A

deplorably large part of what goes by the name of "business" in the world has acquired the nature of betting, — simply that and nothing else.

Betting and gambling in business.

Instead of actually buying and selling such commodities as corn and pork, or such pieces of property as the shares of a railroad, men stake money on the chances of a future rise or fall in the prices of such things. It is called "speculation;" but it is the speculation of gambling, not speculation in trade. It has nothing to do with trade. It connects itself in no way with the producing or the exchanging of things. Those who engage in it are entirely outside of all the movements of useful industry and real trade, standing as onlookers to watch them and to bet

with each other on the future course those movements will take, doing what they can, meantime, to disturb the natural market by falsifying reports and exciting cries. Such so-called "business" bears no resemblance to the useful *busying* which the word properly implies; and yet the two are much confused in the common notions of "business" that now prevail. A clear distinction between them needs to be drawn; and a still clearer distinction between equitable gains derived from the beneficial commerce of mankind, and the predatory gains which one may get by *making* another lose.

Speculation in actual trade is something very different from this. It is an exercise of foresight, calculation, know-

ledge, which enters more or less into all commercial dealing, and its right-

Speculative trade.

ness depends on the care that is taken to harm no others. It is manifestly Right that one who carefully cultivates and uses his intelligence to some serviceable end should have the benefit of an advantage over those who do not; and this can come to him in trade with no loss to others, whose benefit is merely less, and justly less, than his own. He is bound by the great Rule of Right to use any advantage he may happen to possess, whether of strength in his body, or of energy in his spirit, or of capability in his mind, with careful consideration for his fellow men. That marks a limit which each must find for himself.

Within that limit, if he is performing a useful part in society, as a middleman between producer and consumer, it is clearly his right to buy to-day instead of to-morrow, and sell to-morrow instead of to-day, with some risk of loss for a chance of increased gain; and this is speculative trade or "business" in the proper sense of the words. What one gains in it is not obtained by *making* another lose. A may win a profit which B, with equal sagacity or alertness, might have had; but A's gain makes B no poorer than he was before.

EXAMPLES AND OPINIONS

FRAUD WORSE THAN THEFT IN THE MORALS OF THE LILLIPUTIANS. In the satirical romance of "Gulliver's Travels," Dean Swift represents Gulliver as saying of the Lillipu-

tians: "They look upon fraud as a greater crime than theft, and therefore seldom fail to punish it with death; for they allege that care and vigilance, with a very common understanding, may preserve a man's goods from thieves, but honesty has no fence against superior cunning; and since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual intercourse of buying and selling, and dealing upon credit, where fraud is permitted and connived at, or has no law to punish it, the honest dealer is always undone, and the knave gets the advantage. I remember, when I was once interceding with the king for a criminal who had wronged his master of a great sum of money, which he had received by order and ran away with, and happening to tell his majesty, by way of extenuation, that it was only a breach of trust, the emperor thought it monstrous in me to offer as a defence the greatest aggravation of the crime; and truly I had little to say in return,

farther than the common answer, that different nations had different customs; for, I confess, I was heartily ashamed."

CICERO ON THE MORALS OF TRADE. The following passages are from chapters v., vi., xii., and xiii. of the Third Book of Cicero's "Offices," the treatise on Moral Duties which he wrote for the instruction of his son Marcus: —

"To take away wrongfully from another, and for one man to advance his own interest by the disadvantage of another man, is more contrary to nature than death, than poverty, than pain, than any other evils which can befall either our bodies or external circumstances. For, in the first place, it destroys human intercourse and society; for if each for his own gain shall despoil or offer violence to another, the inevitable consequence is that the society of the human race, which is most consistent with nature, will be broken asunder.

. . . It is indeed allowed, nature not opposing, that each should rather acquire for himself than for another, whatever pertains to the enjoyment of life; but nature does not allow this, that by the spoliation of others we should increase our own means, resources and opulence." "One thing, therefore, ought to be aimed at by all men: that the interest of each individually and of all collectively should be the same; for if each should grasp at his individual interest, all human society will be dissolved."

In another part of this fine treatise, Cicero illustrates his idea of honor or rightness in trade by the following example: "Cases often occur when profit seems to be opposed to rectitude, so that it is necessary to consider whether it is plainly opposed, or can be reconciled with rectitude. Of that sort are these questions: If, for example, an honest man has brought from Alexandria to Rhodes a great quantity of

grain during the scarcity and famine of the Rhodians, and the very high prices of provisions; if this same man should know that many merchants had sailed from Alexandria, and should have seen their vessels on the way, laden with corn, and bound for Rhodes, should he tell that to the Rhodians, or, keeping silence, should he sell his corn at as high a price as possible? We are supposing a wise and honest man; we are inquiring about the deliberation and consultation of one who would not conceal the matter from the Rhodians if he thought it dishonorable, but is in doubt whether it be dishonorable." Cicero discusses the question and decides that it would be dishonorable for the corn-merchant to conceal from the Rhodians the coming of the other ships with larger supplies of food. For, he asks, "as to this sort of concealment, who does not see what kind of thing it is, and what kind of man will practice it? Certainly not

an open, not a single-minded, not an ingenuous, not a just, not a good man." Some modern commentators on this passage in Cicero's writings have tried to find ingenious reasons for disputing his judgment; but the great old Roman's sense of Honor and Right was finer and truer than theirs.

HORACE MANN'S VIEW. "The man who sells one thing for another, or less for more, or an inferior for a superior quality, though he may enter a large item on the 'Profit' side of his earthly ledger, yet, in the Book of Life, he will find it entered on the side of 'Loss.' . . . What are palaces and equipages, what though a man could cover a continent with his title-deeds, or an ocean with his commerce, compared with conscious rectitude; with a face that never turns pale at the accuser's voice; with a bosom that never throbs at the fear of exposure; with a heart that might be turned inside out and discover no stain of dis-

honor? To have done no man a wrong; to have put your signature to no paper to which the purest angel in heaven might not have been an attesting witness; to walk and live, unseduced, within arm's length of what is not your own; with nothing between your desire and its gratification but the invisible law of rectitude, — this is to be a man." — HORACE MANN, *Thoughts for a Young Man* (in *Lectures on Various Subjects*), p. 67.

WHAT IS CALLED "A GOOD BARGAIN." "The theory of the modern bargain appears to be that of the mediæval judicial combat; let each do his worst, and God will protect the right. . . . What is ordinarily termed 'a good bargain' is, morally, a bad bargain; it is unequal, and good for one party only. Whenever such a transaction takes place some one is plundered. It is the sufferer, in such cases, who usually regrets the occurrence; in an ideal society it would be the gainer who

would mourn. . . . Sackcloth and ashes are the proper covering of the man who has made 'a good bargain.'" — *New Englander*, 38: 157.

VIII

RIGHT AND WRONG IN CITIZENSHIP

In many parts of our conduct we act in two characters, sometimes in more. We act always as single persons, related alike to all other persons, and always, too, as members of some society or body of persons united for some special purposes of action as a whole. The most important of such societies are those great ones that form nations or states, wherein we are joined together for common purposes of government and law; and when these are democratic, as in America, we act again in two characters, — as the governors and as the governed. We act, that

is, by combination in shaping the government and the law which we act individually in submitting to. This government of each by all, all taking authority from each, is not described with strict correctness when we call it "self-government," as we commonly do; since each self shares both the ruling and the being ruled with millions of *selves* besides his own.

The governed are the governors.

When we carefully consider these several relations in which we live and act as citizens of the democratic republic of the United States, we find that our political conduct as citizens needs serious thinking to make it *Right*. We have to think of what we justly owe to ourselves, — to our own

judgment of rightness and wisdom in measures of government, and to our own highest interests, as affected by the general state of things which government produces in the land. Equally, we have to think of the welfare, the claims, the interests, of nearly eighty millions of people besides ourselves, for whom we hold our political powers in trust, and for whom we act in every vote we cast and every political opinion we declare, as much as for ourselves. In assuming to be partners in the government of a nation we assume a responsibility to all the subjects of the government. Though each citizen is but one of fourteen millions and more who take part in the direction of the government

Responsibility to our fellow citizens.

by their votes, he is just as responsible for so much as his action affects, or might affect, as he would be if he governed autocratically from a throne. Then we have to think, not merely of what we do or can do by our votes, but also of the influence, from knowledge, or opinion, or example, that we may exert or do exert over other votes. In mere voting, a citizen may exercise only one fourteen-millionth part of the power of government in the United States, while in influence his actual share of that power may be ten, or a hundred, or a thousand times as much. He is responsible for what he does by influence, and he is no less responsible for what he *might do and does not*, to help in preserving *rightness* in the

measures of government and in preventing wrong.

Again, — we have to give careful attention to the working of the combinations of "party" that we form with other citizens, whose aims and opinions are more or less in agreement with our own. Such political parties are necessary means to be employed for bringing those together who think somewhat nearly alike, as to what should be the course of government in matters of chief importance, and for concentrating their action on such matters to give it effect. But people who enter a party are always in danger of forgetting that it is only a *means* to use for accomplishing well-considered ends; that it is

Political parties a means, not an end.

properly an instrument to work with, — a servant to be employed; and when they forget this they allow it to take possession of them, and are commanded by it, instead of being served.

It is not possible for one who studies public matters with thoughtful care to be in complete agreement with any political party on every question that arises, and throughout his whole life. The party for such a citizen is the one which, at any given time, is aiming to do the things that he deems then to be most important, in the way that he judges to be wise and Right. His right place of political action is in that party so long, and only so long, as it will help him to do what he believes is most needing to be done. But men

are prone to form habits of attachment to a party that hold them fast after every such reason has ceased to exist. In that case they exercise no longer any thought for themselves in political matters, — act on no judgment of their own; they have surrendered the sovereignty of their citizenship, and are willing, as mere partisans, to do the bidding of other men. The weak tendency in human nature to this partisan habit does measureless mischief to democratic governments, by making it easy for self-seeking politicians to master and use great parties for the accomplishment of their own ends.

The mischief of party feeling as a habit.

Lastly, but not least, in our conduct as citizens we are called upon to think

of our country, not merely as an association of people whose common welfare is to be sought, but as an object in itself of warm and deep affections, which move us as few other affections do. Why men love their own country so much more than the rest of the world seems sometimes, in some countries, very strange; but the affection is an instinct in human nature, and it works good or harm, according to the enlightened cultivation it has received. It has been the frequent cause of wicked and terrible wars, arising out of perverted notions of national greatness and glory and honor, all animated by an untrained and misguided passion of patriotic love and pride. The passion, in itself, is one of great

Untrained patriotism.

nobility, often lifting men to heights of unselfish devotion which hardly any other would give them strength to attain ; but no other passion can be more unreasonably or more wickedly used.

The highest duty we can find in our citizenship is that of educating our patriotism to be moved by true stimulations to right objects and ends. We cannot love our country too ardently ; we cannot think of it with too much pride ; but why, and for what ? Because it is so big ? Because it contains so many people ? Because it is so rich? Because its bigness and its riches make it so strong? Or because it is a country whose people have the greatest possible opportunities for doing their best, — for making the most of themselves

and of their lives? That, in very truth, is the one high distinction of this republic of ours over all other countries in the world, and the one ground for a love and pride that may reasonably exceed the patriotic pride and love of other peoples. All things considered, this country does offer more helpfulness to its inhabitants, in every kind of freedom and free opportunity for every kind of ambitious and aspiring effort, than older countries can. It does so not only by its democratic form of government, but by its democratic form of society; by the spirit of all its institutions, as well as by the character of its laws; by its customs and its habits of feeling and thought; by its very new-

The right inspiration of American patriotism.

ness as a cultivated land; by the immensity of its natural resources, which stimulate every practical energy and faculty of man.

This, then, is what gives to an American the right inspiration of patriotism and the right objects toward which it should press. It excites him to no desire for war, no craving for conquests, no disposition to have his country act the part of a national bully in the world. It makes him glad of its strength, because a strong nation will not be wronged, and escapes all need of war. It gives him no fierce wish to crowd other less fortunate peoples to the wall, in manufactures or in trade, by a hard use of the advantages we hold in our hands. It

The right objects of American patriotism.

turns his ambitions for the country to quite different ends. It bids him strive to have it made a great power in the world, by example and influence, leading the advance of mankind in every refinement of character and every improvement of the conditions of life, showing what humanity can do to uplift itself when it is wholly free. It stings him with pain when he sees any part of the great opportunities of the American people being wasted or ignobly used. It makes him laborious and untiring in efforts to keep the course of government on lines of Wisdom and Right; on lines, that is to say, of Truth, Honor, Honesty, Helpfulness and Good Will to humanity at large. For the Lines of Right between one

nation and another, or between a nation and its citizens, can be no other than the Lines of Right between man and man. The same Golden Rule of Reciprocity draws them all.

So, considering the several relations in which we stand as citizens of the Republic of the United States, we can see very plainly that every Line of Right that is to be drawn for our political conduct has two parts to it, one going straight from the other, both pointed to the same end. In its first part it is the line of careful thoughtfulness and study, — to learn facts, to find sound principles, to form clear and independent judgments, as to what course of government will be most helpful to the best

The Line of Right for our political conduct.

use of the surpassing opportunities for self-improvement and elevation which the people of this fortunate country hold in their hands; what course is honorable and just, in the dealings of our nation with its own people or with others; what course in any juncture is worthy to be made an example to other nations; what course will tend to qualify this Republic for leadership in the higher civilization of the world. In its second part, it is the line of faithful and strenuous endeavor, by influence and vote, in coöperation with other citizens of like thoughtful mind, as joint sovereigns of a democratic republic, to make the course of government accord with the judgments thus carefully formed.

EXAMPLES AND OPINIONS

LOWELL'S POEM OF AMERICAN PATRIOTISM. The noblest poem yet written in America is the Ode which James Russell Lowell recited at Harvard University, on the 21st of July, 1865, in commemoration of the patriotic services of those students and graduates of the University who had fought in the war for the Union, and many of whom had died for their country. Every line of it should be stamped upon the memory of all the youth of America, and especially these, which close the Ode: —

"'T is no man we celebrate,
By his country's victories great,
A hero half, and half the whim of Fate,
But the pith and marrow of a Nation
Drawing force from all her men,
Highest, humblest, weakest, all,
For her time of need, and then
Pulsing it again through them,
Till the basest can no longer cower,

Feeling his soul spring up divinely tall,
Touched but in passing by her mantle-hem.

. . . . . .

Boom, cannon, boom to all the winds and waves!
Clash out, glad bells, from every rocking steeple!
Banners, adance with triumph, bend your staves!
And from every mountain-peak
Let beacon-fire to answering beacon speak,
Katahdin tell Monadnock, Whiteface he,
And so leap on in light from sea to sea,
Till the glad news be sent
Across a kindling continent,
Making earth feel more firm and air breathe braver:
'Be proud! for she is saved, and all have helped to save her!
She that lifts up the manhood of the poor,
She of the open soul and open door,
With room about her hearth for all mankind!
The fire is dreadful in her eyes no more;
From her bold front the helm she doth unbind,
Sends all her handmaid armies back to spin,
And bids her navies, that so lately hurled

Their crashing battle, hold their thunders in,
Swimming like birds of calm along the unharmful
shore.
No challenge sends she to the elder world,
That looked askance and hated; a light scorn
Plays o'er her mouth, as round her mighty
knees
She calls her children back, and waits the morn
Of nobler day, enthroned between her subject seas.'

"Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found re-
lease!
Thy God, in these distempered days,
Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of His ways,
And through thine enemies hath wrought thy peace!
Bow down in prayer and praise!
No poorest in thy borders but may now
Lift to the juster skies a man's enfranchised brow,
O Beautiful! my Country! ours once more!
Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair
O'er such sweet brows as never others wore,
And letting thy set lips,

Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,
The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,
What words divine of lover or of poet
Could tell our love and make thee know it,
Among the Nations bright beyond compare?
What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?
We reck not what we gave thee;
We will not dare to doubt thee,
But ask whatever else, and we will dare."

WASHINGTON'S WARNING AGAINST THE SPIRIT OF PARTY. Washington's Farewell Address to the people of the United States when he retired from the presidency contains a solemn warning against the dangers of an indulgence in the party spirit. "This spirit," he wrote, "unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but, in those

of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy. The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty. Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight), the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a

wise people to discourage and restrain it. It serves always to distract the Public Councils, and enfeeble the Public Administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another, foments occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another. There is an opinion, that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the Government, and serve to keep alive the spirit of Liberty. This within certain limits is probably true; and in Governments of a Monarchical cast, Patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in Governments purely elective, it is a

spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And, there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest, instead of warming, it should consume."

Dr. Francis Lieber on Political Parties. "Parties are unavoidable in free countries, and may be useful if they acknowledge the country far above themselves. . . . But party has no meaning in far the greater number of the highest and the common relations of human life. When we are ailing, we do not take medicine by party prescription. We do not build ships by party measurement; we do not pray for our daily bread by party distinctions; we do not take our chosen ones to our bosoms by party demarcations, nor do we

eat or drink, sleep or wake, as partisans. We do not enjoy the flowers of spring, nor do we harvest the grain, by party lines. We do not incur punishments for infractions of the commandments according to party creeds. We do not pursue truth, or cultivate science, by party dogmas; and we do not, we must not, love and defend our country and our liberty, dear to us as part and portion of our very selves, according to party rules. Woe to him who does!" — Francis Lieber, *Address to Loyal National League*, New York, April 11, 1863.

George W. Curtis on the Intelligent Love of Country. "Patriotism, or the peculiar relation of an individual to his country, is like the family instinct. In the child it is a blind devotion; in the man an intelligent love. The patriot perceives the claim made upon his country by the circumstances and time of her growth and power, and how God is to be served by using those opportunities of help-

ing mankind. Therefore his country's honor is dear to him as his own, and he would as soon lie and steal himself as assist or excuse his country in a crime. Right and Wrong, Justice and Crime, exist independently of our country. A public wrong is not a private right for any citizen. The citizen is a man bound to know and to do the right, and the nation is but an aggregation of citizens. If a man shout, 'My country, by whatever means extended and bounded; my country, right or wrong,' he merely utters words such as those might be of the thief who steals in the street, or of the trader who swears falsely at the Custom-house, both of them chuckling, 'My fortune, however acquired.' Thus we see that a man's country is not a certain area of land, of mountains, rivers and woods, but it is a principle: and patriotism is loyalty to that principle. In poetic minds and in popular enthusiasm this feeling becomes closely associated with the soil

and the symbols of the country. But the secret sanctification of the soil and the symbol is the idea which they represent, and this idea the patriot worships through the name and the symbol, as a lover kisses with rapture the glove of his mistress and wears a lock of her hair upon his heart." — GEORGE W. CURTIS, *Oration at Union College*, July 20, 1857.

SPARTAN PATRIOTISM. In Plutarch's life of Lycurgus, the lawgiver of ancient Sparta, it is said that "he taught the citizens to think nothing more disagreeable than to live for themselves. Like bees, they acted with one impulse for the public good. . . . They were possessed with a thirst for honor, and had not a wish but for their country."

IX

SYMPATHY — BENEVOLENCE — HELPFULNESS

That Truth and Honesty between man and man are Right is a dictate of reason more than of feeling ; but that Helpfulness and Benevolence have the same quality is a suggestion of feeling, which reason is only called on to confirm. It is a suggestion arising from what we call Sympathy, and is mostly, if not wholly, an effect of imagination, which excites some effort in us to feel as another person seems to be feeling, either painfully or pleasurably, as the case may be. It is Nature's prompting and help to human fellowship, enabling

one, as we say, to "put himself in the place" of another, and to imitate, more or less perfectly, the other's state of feeling in his own. We have this prompting and capacity for Sympathy from Nature, just as we have the prompting to do Right, and the capacity to know what *is* Right; but we make ourselves sensitive or callous to this prompting, as we do to the other, by cultivation or neglect.

The cultivation of sympathetic feeling has been nearly, if not quite, the most important kind of culture that has been going on in what we describe as the civilization of mankind. It has produced already immense results, diminishing or removing many causes of hideous suffering in the world, check-

ing many barbarities, weakening many hostilities, spinning many threads of fellowship and weaving them into the social web. The tendency of civilization seems to be toward a state of feeling that will not allow any suffering to exist which can possibly be prevented or relieved. We are very far now from that state; but it is not unreasonable to hope that time may bring it about. We are far from it yet; but our race has traveled far towards it since the process of civilization was begun. If most of us, in the present generation, are not moved as we ought to be by the suffering around us, if we enjoy our own escapes from it too selfishly, if we yield ourselves too carelessly to practices and condi-

Civilization and sympathy.

tions that make it wider and worse than it need to be, we are not able to do so as heedlessly and callously in these days as we might have done in former times. We are pricked and troubled continually by a guilty sense of our own selfish inaction where we feel that we ought to act. If we do try sometimes — as I fear we do — *not* to cultivate a sympathy which is troublesome to our ease, it is never without knowing distinctly that we do Wrong.

When we ourselves suffer, we feel that we have an imperative claim on others for relief, if relief is in their power, or for kindness at their hands, if it is not ; and, when we imagine the suffering of another, we cannot help

feeling the same claim come back to us, unaltered in force. Probably there are none who have no such feeling; probably there are few who try deliberately to suppress or resist it; but probably there are many who try to satisfy it in some easy, inadequate way. The easiest way is that of money-giving "charity;" and if money could extinguish all needs, and if what we call "charity" could discharge all claims of man upon man for help and kindness, it is quite possible that the giving might be raised to an abounding sum. But money-giving "charity," even when it is well directed, can go a very little way towards dealing with misfortunes, distresses and sufferings, as we would

Money-giving "charity."

wish to have them dealt with if they came upon ourselves ; and a great part of such easily rendered " charity " is so ill directed as to do more of harm than of good. The help that is wanted most often from man to man is not out of the pocket, but straight from the hand, from the heart, from the voice ; it is the help of knowledge, of judgment, of experience ; it is help from the stronger and the better instructed to the ignorant and the weak. It is helpfulness towards self-help ; it is encouragement and cheer ; it is teaching and counsel ; it is sympathy made manifest ; it is fellowship and hearty good will. It calls for the giving of time, thought, care, effort ; it may interrupt our occupations, it may break

in on our pleasures ; its claims may often be disturbing to our comfortable ease ; and yet, if we feel towards our fellows as we would have them feel toward us, we cannot wish to be free from such claims.

It is natural, and not improper, that suffering in one who is near and dear to us should move our sympathies more deeply and urgently than suffering in a stranger ; and it is hardly less natural that distress occurring in our own presence, witnessed by our own eyes, should affect us and appeal to us more than the same distress made known to us from a distance by report. The claim for help, too, on the nearest and readiest hands, is much stronger in most circumstances than on those more

remote. But, in so far as the need for help reaches us at all, neither the strangeness nor the distance of the sufferer can rightly excuse us from responding, as we are able, to his cry. Suffering has its right to help, wherever it befalls, from any hand holding power to help, wherever the hand may be. That is a feeling which has grown and spread slowly in the world until even brute animals have been brought within the range of the sympathy it represents. The lowest animal in creation has its right to our protection from needless suffering; the suffering animal has its right to our sympathy and help; for Nature marks no distinction between the suffering of a brute and the suffering of

Animal suffering.

a man, but compels us to be pained in imagination by both.

There have been times, it is sickening to remember, when even human suffering was a source of entertainment to whole communities of people; as at Rome, for example, when the deadly combats of gladiators, and the rending of Christian martyrs by furious wild beasts, were the spectacles most enjoyed. Such heartlessness is possible no longer; but something akin to it still lingers in practices against animals, which make them suffer sometimes for hours the terror of being hunted to their death, or which kill them for no purpose but the killing, and which men are not ashamed to call "sport." It is

Cruelty as "sport."

not the brute creature that is wronged so much by this as the human being, who cultivates the instincts of savagery in himself, and scorns to have his enjoyments refined.

X

GENTLEMEN AND GENTLEWOMEN — THE IDEAL OF CHARACTER AND CULTURE

Let us now gather up the main conclusions we have reached in our little study of *rightness* or *rectitude*, and mould them together, to see what ideal of a nobly cultivated character they will shape in our minds.

If the reasoning we have followed is correct, we can sum the matter nearly by saying that the ideal character must be that of one who never forgets his natural fellowship with all mankind ; who sees himself reflected and feels himself repeated in every human being,

to such a degree that he is instructed by all that is good and warned by all that is evil in his kind, and that, in every communication or dealing with another, he thinks of himself as being changed in place with that other, in order to do as he may feel that he ought to be done by. On this outline of a Golden Chart of Character, traced by the Golden Rule of Conduct, we will note a little of what we have learned to be needed for filling it out.

First, and before all, Self-mastery, — the established dominion of reason and the consciousness of right, over impulses of passion and desire. Plainly, there is nothing that can merit the name of character in man which does not rest on this. So far as it lacks

in him, he remains but an animal, and the measure of his manhood is the measure of his rational and moral self-control. Such control is very easy to hold when won and very hard to recover when lost. Nature, as inexorable as she is generous, makes it so by the strain of Habit which she puts upon our lives. She offers our Habits to us as the penalties of self-indulgence and self-neglect, or as the rewards of self-command ; we may take them as we choose. The cultivated character is that for which the wise choice is made, so that it is served through life by Habits formed and trained with conscientious care.

Self-mastery permits no carelessness, and he who attains it will be studious

to know what is Right, as well as willing and anxious to do it. He will follow no beaten paths of conduct which careless custom has worn smooth, but will find the Lines of Right for himself, by his own thoughtful survey.

Of necessity he will be Truthful, for nearly all Rectitude is comprehended actually in that. To be True (in one's self and towards all others) is to be in all ways Honest, in all ways Honorable, in all ways Faithful, in all ways Sincere, in all ways Just.

If any part of Rectitude is not included here, it is that which belongs to the benevolent, the kindly, the gracious side of character, which we must take care that we do not neglect. As the suggestions of conduct on this side

come from feeling much more than from reason, they seem to be often defective in characters that are otherwise finely formed. In this region of character we need to consider not only the rectitude of what we do to our fellows, but the Manner of it ; for all the pleasure and most of the moral profit of human intercourse depend on the Manner in which it is carried on. It would be quite possible for every logical obligation of Right between man and man to be fulfilled in a manner so harsh, so offensive, so repulsive, as to keep them hateful and hostile to each other, and to make an irredeemably miserable world. To Truthfulness, therefore, or Honesty, and even to Benevolence or Generosity, in human relations, there is

needed the addition of Geniality, of Suavity, of Graciousness, to make it pleasant or profitable for men and women to dwell together.

The subject of Manner, or Manners, is one to be considered as of great importance, but not too great. For Manner may be an expression of character, or it may be a disguise. It may be the well-cultivated manifestation of kindly and genial feelings, outflowing in the speech, the gesture, the bearing and demeanor that will represent them most pleasingly, in the most finely expressive way. These are the Good Manners that we can cultivate as a growth upon the substance of a Good Character, to be from it and of it, perfecting it, and giving us the ideal we seek. But there

are Manners of another make, fashioned by art like a costume, that can be worn outwardly upon a character which inwardly they do not fit. They are made up of phrases and attitudes and looks, the product of conventions and rules. Within limits, the art of polite demeanor which such Manners represent has a value that we must not despise ; but the tendency in most circles to esteem them beyond their worth is very strong. They seem to be all that is needed to realize the ideal of culture in many minds.

For our nobler ideal we demand all the graces of Manner that art can perfect, and all the fine observances that reason and good taste can approve, but only for the beautiful finish of a char-

acter that would be noble and impressive, even if it had them not.

Those who realize our ideal in some sufficient degree we will class as Gentlemen and Gentlewomen, and so give them the highest rank, with the highest title, that exists in any society, or that can exist.

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